Buddhism and Jainism, and possibly with the inception and at least with the spread of Zoroastrianism. Whether we have here more than a coincidence cannot—at least as yet—be determined. It seems clear that the political and economic organization had much to do with the intellectual activity of the times. The division of the realm into many principalities encouraged variety and individuality. Professional scholars wandered from state to state, seeking learning or employment. At the capitals of the different feudatories thinkers gathered and debated. - Some of the rulers encouraged this practice and at least one established a center in which he assembled distinguished representatives of several different schools. It was an age of intellectual ferment and daring.

This flowering of the Chinese philosophical genius was profoundly influenced by early Chinese religion. In a sense, indeed, it was an outgrowth of it.

What the earliest Chinese religion was we cannot certainly tell. The subject has long been provocative of conjecture among Western sinologists, and occasionally of acrimonious debate. Evidence is as yet too fragmentary to permit of final answers. When we first obtain clear pictures of Chinese religion, during the Shang and early in the Chou, the culture of the nation was already far removed from its primitive stages. However, religion was still crude. The Chinese peopled the world with divine influences, with spirits, and with gods and goddesses of various kinds. In each little agricultural village was normally a sacred mound, early the center of life of these communities. There were house gods—for instance, of the hearth, and of the corner where the seed grain

was stored. Spirits or gods of the rivers, of the mountains, of the stars, of other natural objects, and of the five elements were honored or propitiated. Some of the divine influences were scarcely personal. On the other hand, there were intensely personal spirits of the great heroes of the past. The ancestors, too, were believed to live on, sometimes for generations: one soul of each of the dead remained with the body and another ascended on high. However, it was held that in the course of time the souls of the deceased disintegrated and were absorbed into the impersonal forces of nature.

The early Chinese apparently indulged in little profound speculation about religion and were not careful that their views should